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Mail Management Guidelines

for the
National Archives



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TO: All NARA Employees

The postage bill for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is more than \$1.2 million annually, which is approximately 2 percent of NARA's operating budget. However, by following good mail practices, I believe it's possible to reduce this figure.

The most important goal we have to accomplish as part of NARA's mail management program is to provide prompt, efficient service in the most cost-effective manner possible. The success of the program can be achieved only by a combined effort of everyone involved—program managers, mail management personnel, mailroom workers, and all NARA employees who create and/or handle NARA mail.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to familiarize NARA employees with correct mailing procedures under United States Postal Service (USPS) guidelines. By following these procedures, employees will help ensure that mail is handled properly and reaches its destination without delay. Each employee is encouraged to read this pamphlet carefully and to keep it accessible for reference at all times.

The Policy and Program Analysis Division, Information Management and Directives Branch (NAAD), is responsible for NARA's mail management function. Please do not hesitate to call NAAD (523-3214) with any questions concerning mail.



DON W. WILSON
Archivist of the United States

NARA PENALTY MAIL

NARA penalty mail is official mail relating exclusively to the business of the U.S. Government, including the postage and fees paid indicia that is authorized by law to be transmitted in the mail without prepayment of postage. (Penalty mail is not "franked" mail, which is a term often misused.) The indicia cannot be handwritten, typewritten, or rubber-stamped on the mail piece. Indicia labels or envelopes shall not be provided to other agencies, organizations, or persons for the purpose of returning mail to NARA. For this purpose, use business-reply envelopes or labels (see page 3).

GOVERNMENT MAIL IS NOT FREE

Perhaps the most common misconception about Government mail is the cost. NARA reimburses the USPS for penalty mail based on the sampling method. Four times each year, NARA personnel count each piece of outgoing mail for 1 week. The volume of mail counted during each sampling is multiplied by 13.0357 to provide the total cost for each 3-month period. For third-class bulk mailings, express mail, and business-reply mail, the USPS bills NARA directly for actual usage.

While it is true that NARA does not pay for each piece of mail in the way that most of us are familiar, the sampling periods provide a representative quantity of the types of mail being sent. This mail is paid for at the same rates charged to the private sector.

CLASSES OF MAIL

In accordance with USPS guidelines, there are various classes at which mail must be sent. The class of mail is determined by the type of material being mailed and the speed of delivery needed. Mail classes are described in full in the NARA Administrative Procedures Manual (ADMIN. 201), ch. 12.

First-Class Mail

Items such as FOIA requests, reference letters, letters to agency records officers, letters to printing and distribution contacts, record material weighing less than 1 pound, daily batch mailings from NC and NL to field units, and all other items consisting of personal correspondence are to be mailed first-class. If these items are mailed in a 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" or 6 1/16" x 10 1/2" (letter-size) envelope, and weigh 11 ounces or less, the words "FIRST-CLASS" do not need to be marked on the envelopes. The post office will automatically treat these envelopes as first-class mail.

All mail weighing 11 ounces or less, regardless of envelope size, is supposed to be treated as first-class mail by the USPS. However, to ensure first-class service on larger than letter-size envelopes, it is a good idea to mark them "FIRST-CLASS."

Priority Mail

Priority mail is first-class mail for items weighing more than 11 ounces and up to 70 pounds. Examples of priority mail are: records weighing over 11 ounces but less than 1 pound; all first-class mail (as defined on page 1) weighing more than 11 ounces; items weighing 1 pound or more that cannot be sent via United Parcel Service (UPS); and any item weighing more than 11 ounces when speed of delivery is critical.

Large kraft envelopes, jiffy bags, boxes, etc., must be marked as "FIRST CLASS" to ensure first-class service. Items of this size will be treated by the post office as third- or fourth-class mail unless marked otherwise.

Second-Class Mail

NARA does not use second-class mail.

Third-Class Mail

Third-class mail is for single pieces of mail weighing less than 16 ounces and not required by USPS guidelines to go as first-class, and when expeditious handling is not required. It includes merchandise, printed matter, and circular and form letters. This type of mail should be marked "THIRD-CLASS" so that it is not paid for at first-class rates. Third-Class single piece should not be used for any mail under 5 ounces because the cost is the same as first-class.

Fourth-Class Mail

Fourth-class mail (also known as parcel post) is a category for pieces of mail that weigh between 1 and 70 pounds and that are not defined as first-class mail. This category is to be used if speed of delivery is not essential. (Also, see "United Parcel Service.")

Special Fourth-Class Mail

Use this category for books of at least eight printed pages, consisting wholly of reading matter, and containing no advertising matter other than incidental announcements of books. This class of mail is handled by the USPS in approximately the same manner as third-class mail and regular fourth-class mail, but at a cheaper rate. The words "SPECIAL FOURTH-CLASS" must be written or rubber-stamped on the package.

Fourth-Class Bound Printed Matter

Bound printed matter is fourth-class matter that weighs between 1 and 10 pounds and is securely bound by permanent fastenings, such as staples, spiral binding, glue, stitching, etc. It consists of advertising, promotional, directory, or editorial material, or any combination of these. The words "Bound Printed Matter" must be written or rubber-stamped on the package.

United Parcel Service (UPS)

Where available, use UPS to send parcels weighing 1 pound or more and not containing material defined as first-class mail. Packages sent via UPS must contain a complete address, including a street address, room number (building name and room number, if applicable), city, State, and ZIP Code.

Do not use UPS for delivery to post office boxes. When using UPS, do not use envelopes as wrapping; use jiffy bags, mailing tubes, boxes, etc.

International Mail

Mail sent to foreign countries is handled by the USPS either as surface mail or airmail. All letters should be sent airmail. Each mail piece must be marked "AIRMAIL," otherwise it will be handled at the surface rate, which involves a slower means of transportation.

Parcels (items weighing over 4 pounds) should be sent surface mail unless it is absolutely necessary for the recipient to receive the parcel expeditiously.

Next-Day Delivery Mail

Next-day delivery mail is a very expensive service and should not be used unless next-day delivery is essential. Use USPS Express Mail or the carrier who is under Government contract for next-day deliveries (currently Airborne Express) for this service.

Business-Reply Mail

Business-reply envelopes, labels, or postcards should be used only when it is to NARA's benefit to receive the mail. NARA pays the return-postage costs when the business-reply permit is used, not the individual.

In order for the USPS to be reimbursed properly for this type of mail, use envelopes, labels, or postcards that bear the business-reply format, which includes a special permit number assigned only to NARA. Do not use postage and fees paid envelopes, labels, or postcards.

Do not use business-reply envelopes, labels, or postcards to originate outgoing mail.

SPECIAL SERVICES

For additional fees, the USPS offers special services. There are numerous types of special services; however, the only services authorized for NARA's use are registered, certified, and return receipt. In order to use these services, the items must be sent first-class mail. These services provide a proof of delivery but do not expedite delivery or provide indemnity in case of loss. In the case of registered mail, delivery is slower than regular first-class mail.

Registered Mail

Registered mail is the most secure service offered by the USPS. The USPS monitors (by receipts) the mail's movement from the point of posting to delivery. Use this service for classified material, valuable items that cannot be reproduced or would be extremely difficult to replace, an item of monetary value, and money. All registered mail must be hand-carried to the mailroom by the originating office.

Do not place tape or any other sealing device over the intersection of the flap of the envelope since this is where the USPS makes the registration impressions. Do not use window envelopes, jiffy bags, tyvek, or glossy-coated envelopes.

Certified Mail

Certified mail provides the sender with a proof of mailing, and a record of delivery is maintained at the addressee's post office. The post office where the item was mailed does not keep a record of the certification.

Return Receipt

Return receipts can be requested for registered, certified, and Express Mail. Use this service only when it is important to know when the addressee receives the item. The receipt is returned to the sender as proof of delivery. A business-reply postcard, enclosed with the material being mailed, can serve the same purpose as a return receipt and is more economical.

PREPARATION OF MAIL

SELECT THE RIGHT ENVELOPE

Use a letter-size envelope whenever possible.

- Minimum — 3 1/2" x 5"
- Maximum — 6 1/8" x 11 1/2"
- Up to 1/4" thick

Larger envelopes are more costly to purchase and take longer to process through the USPS. Therefore, always fold items to fit letter-size envelopes whenever practicable.

Use an envelope that is only slightly larger than the material being mailed.

- For an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper that can be folded, use a 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" envelope.
- For enclosing a self-addressed (business-reply) envelope, use a 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" envelope. The self-addressed envelope should be 3 7/8" x 8 7/8" and should not be folded.
- For a thin 8 1/2" x 11" item that cannot be folded without being damaged, insert it in a 9 1/2" x 12" envelope, along with a piece of cardboard or binder board for protection during the mailing process.
- For a booklet or other thick item that cannot be folded, use an envelope that is not more than 1 inch longer or wider than the item being inserted.
- For consolidated mailings (several mail items sent to the same address in the same envelope), let the largest item determine the size of the envelope.

Avoid using an envelope larger than 9 1/2" x 12" whenever possible.

Use postcards for transmitting short, informal messages.

Use self-mailers for large mailings of the same type.

Do not use messenger envelopes, such as Standard Forms 65A, 65B, and 65C, to transmit mail to other government agencies (by use of stop numbers) in the Washington, DC, area. The post office no longer delivers mail in this manner.

ADDRESSING MAIL

The correct way to address an envelope is—

Mr. John Smith
1000 Main Street
Kansas City, MO 64131

or

Jones Construction Company
Attn: Mr. Earl Jones
1111 Main Avenue
Chicago, IL 60629

- The last line of the address must always be the city, State, and ZIP Code in that order.
- The next-to-last line must be the post office box or street address, whichever is the delivery point. NOTE: If a street address and a post office box are both used, the one listed directly above the city, State, and ZIP Code is where the post office will deliver it. Also, if delivery is to be made to the post office box, the ZIP Code used must be the one assigned to the post office box, not the street address. For example,

Federal Records Center
24000 Avila Road
P. O. Box 6719
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677-6719

(Post office will deliver to
post office box.)

Note: ZIP Code matches
post office box number.

Federal Records Center
P. O. Box 6719
24000 Avila Road
Laguna Niguel, CA 92656

(Post office will deliver to
the street address.)

Note: This ZIP Code refers
to the street address.

To avoid confusion, it's a good idea not to use both a street address and a post office box number on an envelope.

- Attention lines, correspondence symbols, etc., should be the second line of the address; they never should be below the street address or post office box number.
- Enter designations for special services or class of mail below the indicia and above the address.
- Always use the least expensive class of mail that will satisfy the time requirement and USPS requirements (i.e., Private Express Statutes).
- Use two-letter State abbreviations and use ZIP Codes for speedier handling by the USPS.

- No need to mark "Airmail" on an envelope when sending it within the United States.
- Always use correspondence symbols in the return address to facilitate the return to the originator of undeliverable items (use of symbols by field offices is optional).

When providing NARA's mailing address in letters, publications, by telephone, etc., use one of the following formats:

National Archives
Policy and Program Analysis Division (NAA)
Washington, DC 20408

or

National Archives
Attention: John Doe (NAAD)
Washington, DC 20408

or

Federal Records Center
Attention: (Person's name, if applicable)
380 Trapelo Road
Waltham, MA 02154

or

ALIC (NNIL)	[Use this first line for
National Archives	special project titles,
Washington, DC 20408	account numbers, etc.]

The USPS delivers by ZIP Code to Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area. Each Federal building to which mail is delivered is assigned a unique ZIP Code for that building only. Therefore, building names and street addresses are not necessary and are sometimes confusing to the USPS.

When using UPS or any other parcel carrier service, however, the street address must be used in the return address and for delivery of shipped goods. For example, the address used for deliveries to the National Archives Building must include: 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20408. Other NARA locations must use their physical location address—not their mailing address—for delivery of shipped goods. Do not use post office boxes as part of a shipping address.

When sending packages via USPS or UPS, it's a good idea to include an address label inside the package in case of breakage.

Packages should be wrapped securely, covering staples with tape. Avoid the use of string.

SELF-MAILERS

A self-mailer is a mail piece that includes the NARA penalty mail indicia and requires no separate covering, wrapping, or envelope to be mailed. A self-mailer can be a folded or unfolded postcard, a single sheet or number of sheets, and multipage booklets and magazines. If business-reply postcards are used, the reply part, when detached, must also conform with the requirements for postcards (4 1/4" x 6" maximum) to qualify for the postcard rate.

Self-mailers require less preparation time for mailing and ensure the most economical rate of postage. Contact NAAD if your office is interested in using self-mailers.

GUIDE TO MAILING

(By using these procedures, mail will be prepared within USPS* guidelines and will be handled in the most efficient manner.)

Description of Material	Carrier/Class	Endorsement/Remarks
Any material that weighs up to, but not more than, 5 ounces	USPS/First-Class	No endorsement required.
Handwritten/typewritten messages, bills, statements of accounts, postcards that weigh 11 ounces or less	USPS/First-Class	If mailed in envelope larger than 9 1/2" x 12", mark "FIRST-CLASS" to ensure first-class service.
Handwritten/typewritten messages, bills, statements of accounts, postcards that weigh more than 11 ounces	USPS/First-Class	Mark "PRIORITY" to ensure first-class service.
Material excluding that defined as first-class mail that weighs less than 16 ounces	USPS/Third-Class	Mark "THIRD-CLASS."
Material excluding that defined as first-class mail that weighs 16 ounces or more and contains an address that consists of a street address and preferably a person's name	United Parcel Service	Mark package "UPS." If NARA indicia labels are used, cross out the penalty indicia and the words "Penalty for Private Use, \$300."
Material excluding that defined as first-class mail that weighs 16 ounces or more; is addressed to a P.O. Box or P.O. Drawer; or contains no street address	USPS/Fourth-Class	No endorsement necessary, but if marked "FOURTH-CLASS," will avoid confusion.
Books of at least eight printed pages, consisting wholly of reading matter, and containing no advertising matter other than incidental announcements of books	USPS/Special Fourth-Class	Mark "SPECIAL FOURTH-CLASS."

Description of Material	Carrier/Class	Endorsement/Remarks
Bound printed matter that weighs between 1 and 10 pounds and is securely bound by permanent fastenings, such as staples, spiral binding, glue, stitching, etc.—consisting of advertising, promotional, or editorial material	USPS/Fourth-Class Bound Printed Matter	Mark "BOUND PRINTED MATTER."
Letters/letter packages that weigh up to 4 pounds sent to foreign countries	USPS	Can be sent via surface mail or airmail but must be marked "AIRMAIL" in order to be transported by air.
Material that weighs more than 4 pounds sent to foreign countries	USPS/Surface Mail	No endorsement required. Do not send packages weighing more than 4 pounds via airmail unless absolutely necessary for the recipient to receive quickly.
☞ Next-day delivery	Airborne Express (or current Government contractor) or USPS Express Mail	Prepare according to current procedures in ADMIN. 201.
Information/materials beneficial for NARA to receive—NARA pays the return-postage costs	USPS/Business-Reply	Use special NARA account number and hand-carry to post office. Supply envelopes or labels bearing the business-reply format for the recipient to return to NARA.

NOTE: Contact NAA on (FTS) 523-3214 for information concerning bulk mailings of 200 or more pieces for third-class mail, or 500 or more pieces for first-class mail.

* USPS — United States Postal Service

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ENVELOPE

For first-class mail, here are some useful hints to help you choose the correct envelope size to mail at the most economical rate.

Number of Pieces of Paper*	Envelope Size	Weight Category
1 - 6	4 1/8" x 9 1/2"	1 ounce or less
7 - 13	4 1/8" x 9 1/2"	Over 1 ounce, and up to 2 ounces
	or	
	6 1/16" x 9 1/2"	
14 - 27	9 1/2" x 12"	Over 2 ounces, and up to 5 ounces
28 - 70	9 1/2" x 12"	Over 5 ounces, and up to 11 ounces
71 - 95	9 1/2" x 12"	Over 11 ounces, and up to 1 pound
10		

* Figures based on paper such as NARA letterhead and 20-pound bond paper, size 8 1/2" x 11".